

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

AI | 1. (Currently Amended) An encryption key depositing ~~apparatus~~apparatus, comprising:

a unit that generates an encryption key for a user; and

a unit that starts a process in response to the generation of said encryption key, said process allowing a depositary, ~~deposited with~~ which said generated encryption key was deposited, to store said key in a subsequently recoverable ~~manner~~manner; and

a server and a plurality of clients, wherein recovery information, usable to recover said encryption key, is encrypted by a public key of said depositary and is retained in said server,

wherein said server, in response to a recovery request from the depositary, sends to said depositary said recovery information encrypted by said public key of said depositary, and acquires from said depositary said recovery information decrypted by a private key of said depositary and then encrypted by a public key of said server.

2. (Original) The encryption key depositing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said encryption key is a private key of a public key cryptosystem.

3. (Original) The encryption key depositing apparatus according to claim 1, further having rules established as a basis for determining said depositary, said encryption key being stored in accordance with said rules.

4. (Canceled).

AA | 5. (Currently Amended) The encryption key depositing apparatus according to claim 1, ~~claim 4~~, ~~wherein said server, in response to a recovery request from said depositary,~~

~~sends to said depositary said recovery information encrypted by said public key of said depositary;~~

~~_____ wherein said server acquires from said depositary said recovery information decrypted by a private key of said depositary and then encrypted by a public key of said server;~~

~~wherein said server decrypts the acquired encrypted recovery information is decrypted by use of using a private key of said server, the decrypted recovery information being used together with said private key of said server regarding said depositary to decrypt said recovery information about said encryption key; and~~

~~wherein the server recovers said encryption key using the decrypted acquired recovery information is used to recover said encryption key.~~

6. (Currently Amended) The encryption key depositing apparatus according to claim 5~~1~~, wherein said server logs historical records of the recovery ~~requests~~ request.

7. (Original) The encryption key depositing apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said server, in response to an encryption key acquisition request from said depositary, encrypts said recovered encryption key using said public key of said depositary and sends said encrypted recovered encryption key to said depositary.

8. (Currently Amended) The encryption key depositing apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said server logs historical records of the encryption key acquisition ~~requests~~ request.

9. (Currently Amended) The encryption key depositing apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said server ~~does not send the recovered encryption key to said depositary, and performs on behalf of said depositary a process using said encryption key in response to a processing request from said depositary.~~

10. (Currently Amended) The encryption key depositing apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said server logs historical records of the processing ~~requests~~ request from said depositary.

11. (Original) The encryption key depositing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said historical records are supplied to the user to whom said encryption key is assigned.

12. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ A method for depositing an encryption key,
~~depositing method comprising the steps of:~~ comprising:
generating an encryption key for a user; and
starting a process in response to ~~the generation of~~ generating said encryption key, said process allowing a depositary, ~~deposited~~ with which the generated encryption key was deposited, to store said key in a subsequently recoverable ~~manner~~ manner;
encrypting recovery information using a public key of the depositary, the
recovery information usable to recover the encryption key;
sending the encrypted recovery information to the depositary in response to a
recovery request from the depositary; and
acquiring from the depositary the recovery information decrypted by a private
key of the depositary and then encrypted by a public key.

13. (Currently Amended) A computer storage medium having executable software code, the executable software code program product comprising encryption key depositing method in a manner executable by a computer system, said encryption key depositing method comprising the steps of:

instructions for generating an encryption key for a user; and

instructions for starting a process in response to the generation of generating
 said encryption key, said process allowing a depositary, ~~deposited with~~ which the generated
 encryption key was deposited, to store the key in a subsequently recoverable ~~manner~~ manner;

instructions for encrypting recovery information using a public key of the
depositary, the recovery information usable to recover the encryption key;

instructions for sending the encrypted recovery information to the depositary
in response to a recovery request from the depositary; and

instructions for acquiring from the depositary the recovery information
decrypted by a private key of the depositary and then encrypted by a public key.

14. (New) The encryption key depositary apparatus according to claim 5, wherein
 the server logs the depositary on historical records of depositaries,

wherein, in response to an acquisition request from the depositary, the server
 determines whether the depositary is logged on the historical records of depositaries, and, if
 so, the server encrypts the recovered encryption key using the public key of the depositary and
 sends the encrypted recovered encryption key to the depositary.

15. (New) An encryption key recovering method, comprising:
 receiving recovery request from a depositary for recovering an encryption key,
 the encryption key associated with recovery information, the recovery information encrypted
 with a public key of the depositary and retained at the server;

sending the encrypted recovery information to the depositary; and
 acquiring from the depositary the encrypted recovery information that is
 decrypted by a private key of the depositary and then encrypted by a public key of the server.

16. (New) The method of claim 12, further comprising:
 decrypting the acquired encrypted recovery information using a private key of
 said server; and

recovering said encryption key using the decrypted acquired recovery information.

17. (New) The method of claim 12, further comprising:
logging historical records of the recovery request.
18. (New) The method of claim 16, further comprising:
encrypting said recovered encryption key using said public key of said
depository in response to an encryption key acquisition request from said depository; and
sending said encrypted recovered encryption key to said depository.
19. (New) The method of claim 18, further comprising:
logging historical records of the encryption key acquisition request.
20. (New) The method of claim 16, further comprising:
performing on behalf of said depository a process using said encryption key in
response to a processing request from said depository.
21. (New) The method of claim 20, further comprising:
logging historical records of the processing request from said depository.
22. (New) The method of claim 16, further comprising:
supplying said historical records to the user to whom said encryption key is
assigned.
23. (New) The computer storage medium of claim 13, the executable software
code further comprising:
instructions for decrypting the acquired encrypted recovery information using
a private key of said server; and
instructions for recovering said encryption key using the decrypted acquired
recovery information.

24. (New) The computer storage medium of claim 13, the executable software code further comprising:

instructions for logging historical records of the recovery request.

25. (New) The computer storage medium of claim 23, the executable software code further comprising:

instructions for encrypting said recovered encryption key using said public key of said depositary in response to an encryption key acquisition request from said depositary; and

instructions for sending said encrypted recovered encryption key to said depositary.

26. (New) The computer storage medium of claim 25, the executable software code further comprising:

instructions for logging historical records of the encryption key acquisition request.

27. (New) The computer storage medium of claim 23, the executable software code further comprising:

instructions for performing on behalf of said depositary a process using said encryption key in response to a processing request from said depositary.

28. (New) The computer storage medium of claim 27, the executable software code further comprising:

instructions for logging historical records of the processing request from said depositary.

29. (New) The computer storage medium of claim 24, the executable software code further comprising:

instructions for supplying said historical records to the user to whom said
encryption key is assigned.

3
A